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117

# AN ORATION,

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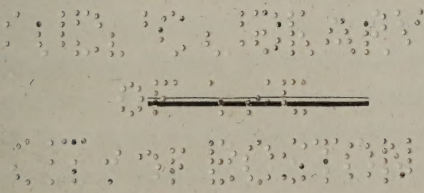
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Before the <sup>✓</sup> Anti-Slavery Society of New York,

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1834,

BY

DAVID PAUL (BROWN.)



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Dr. Jeffery R. Brackett  
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## ORATION.

THIS is the birth-day of American Liberty. Her fanes and temples, from the Atlantic to the Pacific shores, are thronged by the ranks of freemen, and loud Io Pæans resound from the centre to the extreme of this vast continent. There are groans, however—heart-thrilling, heart-rending, heart-appalling groans—mingled with the shouts of exulting triumph, that burst upon the ear. They are the groans of slavery—of two millions of bondmen that pour forth their clamorous griefs, and imprecate curses upon the national sacrifice which we this day offer before the throne of the Most High. It is in vain that the trumpet sounds; in vain that we applaud the bright-eyed goddess “to the very echo that doth applaud again;” still the voice of sorrow and the clanking of chains ~~is~~ heard in the very heart of our rejoicing, and convert all our joys into sadness. Let us then, for awhile, suspend these tumultuous offerings, and retard the passing pageant, while we lend an attentive ear to the complaint of the mourners, and contribute to that alleviation of their woes which shall best comport with the necessity of *their* condition and the liberality and justice of our *own*. First, let us understand the liberty we *enjoy*, and then let us consider the slavery they *suffer*.

Liberty is heaven-descended and heaven-protected; she is the twin sister of Virtue, and they live and they die as they were born—together; the abode of both is in the heart; and history, in its numerous examples, abundantly shows that, in proportion

as vice and corruption encumber the earth, liberty sinks in the esteem of the people, until at length she is either voluntarily relinquished, or so vitiated in principle, as to lose her divine attributes, and to become only another and more specious name for licentiousness and crime. Without liberty and her attendant blessings, life itself would be a burthen, and the world a waste.

“ For what is life ?

’Tis not to walk about and draw fresh air  
From time to time, and gaze upon the sun ;

’Tis to be free ! When liberty is gone  
Life grows insipid and has lost its relish.”

It was, my fellow-citizens, for liberty thus characterized and understood that “ the Hampdens struggled and the Sidneys died.” It was for such liberty that the richest blood of all this land flowed freely, during the doubtful periods of our revolution. It was for such liberty that your Washington unfurled the star-spangled banner of his country, and redeemed the outraged rights of suffering millions from the very throat of death.

“ O, let it never perish in your hands,  
But piously transmit it to your children.”

What, then, is slavery?

“ Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, slavery, still art thou a bitter draught; and although thousands of all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account.” Such, my fellow-citizens, was the sentiment of one of the most distinguished among the literati of the last century ; and, like all sentiments that have their foundation in nature, it continues to be as applicable in the present age as in the past.—*Absolutely* it is most true; yet it is, nevertheless, in its *relative* bearing and effects, liable to be modified or extended, according to the varied and diversified conditions of men. Even abject slavery, among those who enjoy but a qualified freedom, is less irksome, less repugnant to the heart of man, than qualified slavery, when suffered while surrounded by those who are revelling



in all the delights and indulgences of rational liberty. The enjoyments of human life are almost always comparative in their nature; where there are no princes there are no subjects;—where there are no despots there should be no slaves;—and where there are no slaves there can be no despots. If this doctrine be sound, most melancholy must be the condition of the bondsman with us—as, wherever he turns his dejected eyes, he is referred at once to the true measure and majesty of man. He beholds around and about him, thousands of chartered monarchs, hailing at each return of this happy day, the anniversary of their liberty, and affording the best assurance of its perpetuity, from their love and gratitude for its origin. What is there, thus surrounded, to endear life to a slave, or to render death appalling? He has no consolation in himself or in his relatives. His wife, his children, all partake of his condition; all serve to render the weight of his burthen less tolerable. Even hope itself, the very pride and stay of the human heart, is denied to him—and ambition, without which man is but a kneaded clod, either never glances into his benighted mind, or, if it should, it is like the lightning, serving only to make the gloom more terrific, the darkness more intense. Education, moral or intellectual improvement, without ulterior views to freedom, instead of being blessings, as they were designed to be, are but superadded curses and afflictions. Whatever tends to improve the heart or the mind of man, while it certainly increases his sources of gratification, so long as he walks freely and erectly in the likeness of his Creator, serves only to aggravate his suffering, when reduced below his natural level, and condemned to a state of vassalage or bondage. In his wife he sees a joint sufferer in his shame; in his children he contemplates the inheritors of his disgrace—and thus sympathetically suffers beyond the grave;—in his parents he beholds the involuntary authors of all his misery; and while he groans and sweats under a weary life, naturally revolts against those by whom that life has been entailed upon him, and some-

times even rebels against the too partial decrees of high Heaven itself. Still, if this lamentable condition of the slave contribute to the melioration or refinement of the free, although naturally there can be no justification for it, the account of good and evil may, when politically adjusted, stand nearly balanced; and in the equipoise, the great interest of the world at least may remain essentially unaffected and unimpaired.

Are then the free benefited by the existence of slavery among them? This is a grave question, and must be gravely considered. An illustrious statesman and orator of the British House of Commons, no less a man than Edmund Burke, has declared that the people of the South are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty, than those to the North; as in such a people the haughtiness of domination, combined with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

Let us not confound the man with his principles—nor the principles with the man. Time has lamentably shown that the most distinguished individuals have, from that very distinction, often given currency to sentiments of the most corrupt and pernicious tendency. In the foppery and vanity of chosen expressions, in the fervour of poetical fancy, in the ardour of animated debate, when selfishness and success were the prime objects, the rights of thousands have been sacrificed to swell the triumph of a well-turned period. I agree that the flame of liberty burns most brightly in the region of slaves, as the moon beams most brightly through a thunder-cloud; not that she repletes her waning face from the storms and tempests by which she is surrounded, but because her charms are presented in bolder and in prouder relief, than when she silently wheels her pale course through the mild cerulean, while every planet participates in her majesty and glory. Certainly there is no greater devotion to liberty than among the inhabitants of the South; but it is *exclusive* liberty, the liberty that they themselves enjoy,



and which is enhanced upon the principles adverted to, by the very destitution, the deplorable condition, of those whom they daily contemplate.

Like the green spots of the arid desert, liberty, with them, looks greener and more lovely from the barren, desolate, and lugubrious scenes by which it is encompassed. Speak to the South of equality of right, and you will at once perceive that with them the doctrine is carried to this extent: that, like the lady of Johnsonian memory, we should always bring those above us down to *our* level, but never level upwards. There is a vast difference between a devotion to liberty, and the establishment of those fundamental principles upon which alone liberty can be perpetuated. Slavery is not simply to be deplored as respects the slave, nor as regards the odium which it necessarily attaches to the character of a free government, but from its obvious tendency to imbue the minds of the holders of slaves with lofty and aristocratical notions—from having been accustomed to place the foot upon the necks of slaves, they may next audaciously attempt trampling upon the sacred and invaluable rights of freemen.

No pride is so dangerous to a free country as the pride which arises from lording it over our fellow-men; it matters not how limited may be the scale, the moment we rise above our fellow-creatures, we swell beyond our natural and legitimate proportions, and in the unjust extension of our own imaginary rights, necessarily limit and restrain the just immunities of others. Pride builds on pride, as Alps on Alps arise. Each successive generation, cradled under the influence of accumulated prejudice, and inhaling the tainted gale of tyranny in every breath, at last seems to claim a share in the divine right of kings, and wields the iron sceptre with a truly regal, though unlineal hand. Can this be said to be consistent with the true republican principle, with liberty and equality, with the boasted charter of our rights, with the happiness or security of the government, with our duties to this world, or our final responsibility to the next?

But this is not all; while they profess to stand above the unhappy slave in superiority of political rights, the influence of slavery exercises an immense moral power over *them*. "Vice will sooner transform virtue from what it is to a crime, than the force of virtue can translate vice into its likeness."

They see about them a herd of unenlightened blacks—with none of the restraints of morality, religion, or education; none of the rewards of virtue to hope for, none of the punishment of vice to fear—giving reins to the most unrestrained animal propensities, and reducing the immortal character of man to the vile level of mere brutish instinct. What will be the effect of an habitual intercourse or community with a society of this grade? The obvious result is this, that for the overweening pride and power which slavery is calculated to impart to the master, it may deprive him of most of those valuable qualities which alone can render *pride* excusable or *power* tolerable.

Having considered the occasion of our assemblage, and thrown out, as connected therewith, some general views in regard to liberty and slavery, I propose now briefly to examine the evil of slavery, and the remedy.

I presume it will not be necessary, in proceeding to consider the evil, that it should be shown *to be an evil*. All the South admits it. Who doubts it? The misfortune of discussions of this nature chiefly is, that they exhaust themselves in attacking where there is no resistance; in proving what requires no proof, being no subject of denial, in lieu of directing themselves against the strong-hold of slavery—namely, the inexpediency of immediate emancipation. "Discretion being the better part of valour," fearing to take the bull by the horns, they take him by the tail, and become exhausted and out of breath by a fatiguing round-about race—instead of bearing off the trophies of a successful conflict, or perishing in the attempt. That slavery is an evil all nature cries aloud; it is written as a curse in the very consciences of men; and really it is a matter of min-



gled horror and amazement, to see some reverend and learned gentlemen, "Fathers of the Church," attempting to justify it by a reference to this holy volume. They have, it is true, succeeded in showing that there were slaves in the earliest ages, and that the Deity endured this outrage upon his own image. Why, they could claim a prescriptive right for all other sins upon exactly the same plea, because *they* also have existed from the period of the first fall.

I cannot speak of the sacred scriptures and think of slavery at the same time—it is almost blasphemous.

"The devil can cite scripture for his purpose :

The evil soul producing holy witness

Is like a villain with a smiling cheek ;

A goodly apple rotten at the heart."

Although even the fastest friends of slavery should shrink from the Bible as from a sentence of condemnation, yet some of our professed disciples, by way of sugaring the bitter pill of emancipation, and adapting it to the palate of the South, must, forsooth, be prying into the mysteries of the Old Testament, for the very laudable purpose of excusing this most flagitious offence in the eyes of God and man. And *others* of our friends, and well-meaning friends too, deem it necessary to resort to the same oracular source to show that man, whatever might be his complexion, was never *designed* by the Deity to be converted into a beast, however his crimes and his sinful appetites may have degraded him at times, even below irrational creation. What arguments can be required on such a subject? Why ask if you are by nature free?—is not your charter written upon your hearts with the very finger of the Deity? Why ask whether you *alone* are prescriptive and anointed freemen? Your boasted Declaration, or Bill of Rights, handed down to you by a great political apostle, and forming your political creed, if higher authority were wanting, declares "all men equal, and endowed

by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Slavery, then, we say, is an unquestioned evil. How shall we remove that evil? By restoring the slaves to freedom.—That is my broad proposition. The manner is a secondary consideration. Slave-holders, colonizationists, all profess to agree in this—under various restrictions, it is true—but still they all agree, for it cannot be denied that they are unlawfully held in bondage. The *quo modo* is the matter. The slave-holders say that the slaves, if free, should never be admitted to an equality of political rights:—and they further say, they will free them in their own time. We answer, restore them to their natural rights, and *name your time*; but let it be *in time*, and not *in eternity*. The colonizationists seem to join in the notion of natural inferiority on the part of the blacks, and the impolicy of their liberation at home, but advocate their right to freedom, provided they will consent to deportation; and justify this apparent inconsistency by alleging, that it is only in this way that the South and the North can be brought to unite in the liberation of slaves. The Abolition Society, though wholly devoted to the melioration of the condition of the blacks, manifests its power rather in its accumulated moral influence upon their condition, than by any direct and urgent application of political means calculated immediately to release them from their thralldom. The Anti-Slavery Society, on the contrary, like Curtius, for the salvation of the country, armed cap-a-pie, plunges at once into the gulf, denounces slavery as a national curse, adopts means for immediate emancipation, denies that freedom should depend upon expatriation, and pronounces colonization, in this respect, as actually conducive to slavery. They are zealous, it is true; yet, with all their zeal, founded as it is in the purest and least questionable philanthropy, how preposterous is it to charge them with moral treason against the Constitution,—with cruel and bitter hatred and malignity,—a design to ferment a servile



war in the South,—to break up the Union, and to shed their brother's blood; yet of all this, and much more, are they accused.

And here, publicly, in their behalf, as patriots and Christians, that charge is indignantly denied and repelled. *Moral treason!*—for what? For the purpose of suppressing *immorality?* admirable philosophy!—then your Temperance Societies, your Missionary Societies, your Bible Societies—aye, your sacred temples of worship, consecrated to an All-Good and Almighty Being, according to this doctrine, are all founded in moral treason; for the object of all these is the suppression of vice. But who are these moral traitors?—I will not ask by whom they are defamed. In Europe, they are Wilberforce, Pitt, Fox, Clarkson, Brougham, O'Connell, and Lafayette. With us the names are not less illustrious, Franklin, Rush, Morris, Wistar, Rawle, and a long line of distinguished philanthropists. Men who have exhausted their lives in the service of their country, and for the benefit of mankind. They, and such men, are moral traitors. Heaven save the mark!—if these be traitors, treason is a virtue. But they are new men forsooth, unknown to fame, while the only dispute with their assailants seems to be, which is most of a patriot or a patriarch. Suppose we admit them to be both, why then certainly they can rely upon their own intrinsic merits, without conjuring up these red rags, these bloody phantoms, and all the horrors of civil or servile war, to fright the land from its propriety. Our motto is, “Our Country—our whole Country, and nothing but our Country, one and inseparable, now and forever,” and I trust I speak the sentiment of every one who hears me, when I say, that notwithstanding the abhorrence in which slavery is, and ever ought to be, held by the free States, still if, as has been industriously suggested, the only choice were between that evil and a total dismemberment of the Union, we should undoubtedly and promptly prefer the former; yet even in so doing it is possible we should be governed rather by a tender regard for ourselves and brethren,

than by a respect for posterity. Nevertheless, it becomes us to enlist and to exert all lawful means to avoid even the lesser evils, provided it can be done without encountering the greater; and if we cannot effect a radical cure, why let us, at least, alleviate the distress by assuasives, rather than increase it by irritation.

The controversy in which we are now engaged ought to be considered a friendly, a fraternal struggle,—intended to benefit, and not to destroy—to propitiate, and not to aggravate—to soothe, and not to terrify. Why should the asperities of the respective States be sharpened, or their motives impugned? Why should they be heralded to the lists by angry disputants, armed at all points for an unsparing war? It is dangerous to familiarize our mind to such unholy thoughts, they are unworthy us,—they increase by indulgence, and may, finally, produce those evils which at first they only threatened. The cruelty of Nero, we are told, was first exercised on a fly—it was matured in the slaughter of his fellow-creatures! Evil conceits are the parents of crime; from being familiar, they at length become practical, and from being practical, they may at last appear laudable; their encouragement is dangerous, their expression often treasonable. Nor are our fears and forebodings more fatal to our tranquillity than threats; these breed ill blood among us; they exclude the genial light of reason from our councils, and enkindle in its place the devouring flame of dissension and of discord, of hatred and revenge! If they *fail*, the wounds of disappointment rankle in the heart; if they *succeed*, it is too frequently by extorting from our fears or affections, what should spring only from our judgment and our justice! The weakness of that argument may always be fairly suspected, which thus addresses itself to the passions, and not to the understandings of man. Let us dismiss all such unsocial and improper influence from our minds, while we candidly and dispassionately investigate the merits of this question.

I. Is it expedient that slavery should be abolished?

II. How may it be done?

*First, then, is it expedient?*

Morality approves it; religion approves it. These, even in every political discussion, are towers of strength. But, when it shall be perceived that, independently of both, policy sanctions it, in some shape, nothing will remain to be said.

Prima facie—as the lawyers say—that which morality and religion approve must be expedient; and we must, therefore, look to the objections that are urged against it. Some of them have, perhaps, been anticipated in the remarks already made; the others I will now *briefly* consider; for really, instead of this subject being fully examined in an humble address of this character, to do justice to it would require volumes. It is so full, so various, so complicated, as to afford, indeed, an exhaustless fund for discussion. The *prominent* objections, therefore, are those only which befit the present time.

*First*, then, it is said to be inexpedient, because it will produce civil war. Why, this is to render it inexpedient by the mere determination to resist it. Then religion is inexpedient because infidels will not believe;—like “the adder, they will not hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.” This is the same argument that was used against the tariff; the same argument that was urged against the restrictions upon the admission of Missouri; the same argument that is resorted to upon every question which produces a collision between Federal and State rights: and, permit us to observe, it is the most dangerous argument that can be adopted, because it is addressed to the *fears*, and not to the *reason* of man. Threats like these, however, from being familiar, have long since ceased to be terrible; they can excite with us no other feeling than regret, that our southern brethren, after having been so often foiled and disappointed in similar calculations, should still remain so incorrigibly weak, in spite of experience, as to dream of controlling,



or even influencing, the free States, by those air-drawn daggers. The advocates for liberty are to be reached only through their reason; they take no counsel from their passions in national discussions: satisfy them that the encouragement of slavery, or even its toleration, can possibly be productive of any beneficial, moral or political result; satisfy them that it would not be, in its fairest aspect, an indelible stain upon our national character, and a daring outrage against high heaven, and its continuance will no longer be resisted: but this gasconading system never will succeed; it never should succeed—like all other evils, it will increase with indulgence; so that at length every question, whatever may be its importance, will be decided, not with regard to its intrinsic merits, or the general advantage of the country, but from a disposition to conciliate the refractory and preserve unimpaired the tranquillity of the government.

*Secondly*, They say, that, by the Articles of Confederation, the property of the slave-holder in his slave was ratified and confirmed. It was so. And without contending that no legal concession is binding that is against the law of nature and of God, we may be allowed to say, that if, as we are told, the entire South is desirous of being relieved from the curse of slavery, and the only question is as to the *manner*, we cannot understand how they can rationally contend for the continued entailment of the curse, whatever may have been its ratification. It seems that, rather than escape from the impending horrors of a servile war, they would encounter the superadded horrors of a civil war. If they suppose we would subject them to *either*, they mistake us utterly; we do not ask to add to their afflictions; we pray only to be permitted to relieve them; to relieve them in a manner most salutary and effective. We suffer in their suffering as co-members of the great national family; and we shrink from, while contemplating, that wretched empiricism, that directs all its efforts towards healing the skin, while the heart is in decay. But, say they, we will relieve our-

selves in our own way. Is it, then, proper that a patient with a fever fit upon him should be permitted to prescribe his own medicine—to abjure his physician, and disdain the advice of his family? Will you not at least listen to us? Your interests are ours; we flourish or perish together; and we here avow, whatever may be our efforts, stimulated by a sense of duty, for the emancipation of the slave, we are mainly influenced by liberal and affectionate regard for you. Do you not perceive, that if you are sincere in the desire to shake off this burthen, this is the time; that its weight accumulates with every hour; and that, when at last you are crushed and crippled under it, it will be entirely too late for that vigorous exertion, which is essentially necessary in order to the removal and expulsion of the evil? We are prepared to aid you now, in any rational system for emancipation. But do not delude yourselves; self-delusion upon this subject is worse than death. Do not, like the monster monarch, amuse yourselves with performing the funeral dirge of Liberia, upon your new fangled fiddle, while your Rome is burning. Let us jointly rather beard the lion in his den, and take captivity captive. Instead of spending our lives in cold debate, let us, together, like a band of brothers, rush to the rescue, and we must succeed: let us talk no more of expediency; expediency is ever the subterfuge in a conflict with principle.

“And can we, honoured with a Christian name,  
 Buy what is woman born and feel no shame?  
 Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead  
 Expedience as a warrant for the deed?  
 So shall the wolf, whom famine has made bold  
 To leave the forest and invade the fold:  
 So shall the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,  
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bedside:  
 Not he, but his convenience forced the door:  
 He found it inexpedient to be poor.”

But it is further urged, that this property, these souls and sinews, are theirs; grant it, though the warm blood freezes

while we grant it. Still, if they profess to be willing to manumit them in order to colonization, the mere pecuniary interest becomes no subject of objection, as the loss in both cases would be the same. Or, if we are answered that this manumission is to be partial, and not general, why then we reply, as has long been contended, that while colonization diminishes the branches of this upas, it causes the tree to take a deeper root in the soil of freedom, and to flourish in wider and less eradicable ruin. By unanimity among the different States, under the sanction of the National Government, a thousand less objectionable modes of relief might be adopted. Colonies, within the United States, upon the millions of acres unimproved, might be created. The flourishing province of Texas is open to us; almost the whole earth opens her bosom and stretches wide her arms to lure us on to one great national effort in behalf of the oppressed—nay, not only in behalf of the oppressed, but in behalf of the oppressor, and for the honour of the free government under which they both live.

But it is said they must not be permitted to remain with us, that this is the danger—*there* is no danger. Their condition must, even if not slavish, necessarily remain servile; as free-men, their services would be infinitely more valuable, and the expenses incident to them, by no means proportionably increased. Diffused over this vast country, the poison would be so diluted, so neutralized, as to lose its destructive properties, and all society would soon resume its healthy tone, with the blessing of heaven upon its head, and the peace of heaven at its heart.

Still, shall we admit them to the rights of citizens?—that is a matter for future consideration; it does not essentially belong to the question, whether it is expedient to restore them to their natural rights. Political rights may be regulated according to circumstances, at least in reference to those whose freedom is conditional in its character—we cannot perceive how this inquiry



can be more available against us than against colonization. The blacks are free who are conveyed to the colony; they, as free-men, can return to the land of their choice; that is, those who survive Liberia; and, therefore, the only difference is, a voyage to the colony and back. How far this shall qualify them for the purposes of government, and remove the objection to the enjoyment of equal rights, it remains for the friends of that circuitous and anomalous system to inform us.

But it is also said, apart from all these views, that colonization is preferable, because it is gradual. Very gradual indeed; and it now, if we may use the expression, *graduates* backwards faster than it ever *graduated* forwards, so that it will probably require an eternity before it reaches either one end or the other of its mighty march. It is like the pendulum of a clock, constantly moving, but always within the same limit; yet, at the present time, even that simile fails, for it moves no longer, having fairly run down; and what is worse, having lost their golden key, there is but little probability of its being wound up into renewed action—alas! Aladdin's lamp is gone! But the question as to immediate or gradual emancipation, still does not touch the expediency of liberating the slaves, but, like most of the difficulties, rather appertains to the second proposed point of inquiry, namely, how is this object to be accomplished?

Now, I confess, with all my devotion to the great cause of human freedom, still, if it were left to me to strike their chains off instantly, and with a single blow, I would hesitate before the blow was struck. Hesitate, not for myself, not for the safety or security of the government, not for its probable effects upon society, but for the slaves themselves. They are not, as a mass, morally or intellectually in a condition qualifying them for so sudden and unexpected a change; the flood of light that would pour in upon them, would prove too powerful for their long benighted vision; or, in other words, they might surfeit in the excess of joy. Yet in argument we should contend, nevertheless,

for immediate emancipation, because the system of delays is dangerous to this enterprize, and enables the adversary, while collecting his strength, to impair ours. Emancipation cannot immediately result from immediate causes, but the urgency of those causes will bring it about, assuredly in good season; and under the blessing of Heaven, the seed sown to-day shall produce an abundant harvest of rich fruit in all time to come. I would, I say, contend for the doctrine, because it is among the most effectual. It cannot, we agree, succeed to its ostensible extent, but it will succeed *better* than those projects that claim but little, and eventually relinquish *that* for the purposes of conciliation. The conciliation that rests upon the abandonment of principle, is prostitution; it renders opposition obdurate, and diminishes the prospect of future success. Let us not, however, differ about terms; exchange the term *immediate* for *certain*; we will not quarrel as to a month, or a year, or twenty years, if our antagonists will only concur with us in reducing the liberation of the slaves to an actual *certainty*.

How then is this to be accomplished. Not by colonization—the experiment has been made, and has failed—fearfully failed. We need not refer to the wanton expenditure of life—to the souls that shall meet us at count—to the means lavished and wasted—to the hopes ripened and blasted—which all stand imperishably recorded upon this living monument of folly and fanaticism:—the timeless tenant of the narrow house proclaims it, and the execrations of suffering thousands point to Liberia as the fruitful source of irremediable woe. Why then will these headlong zealots rush onward to the fall? Why will they assail those who resist their destructive career? That colonization might prove a valuable auxiliary to liberty, we are not prepared to deny; but that *such* colonization, thus advocated, thus conducted, thus condemned, can ever be productive of beneficial results, it is madness to assert. Nor is it merely on the score of its doing *no good* that it is objectionable, but that it

actually does *harm*. Harm, not simply in antedating the doom of thousands who have confided in it, but in withdrawing attention for a time from other and infinitely more rational plans of freedom. Half of the victory might have been achieved during the fifteen years that public interest has been employed and public means squandered in cherishing and bedizening this sickly and misbegotten offspring of an illicit alliance between the North and the South—this child of forty fathers, that has been christened *Colonization*—which, practically rendered, signifies DEATH. Among its friends, however, there are many valuable, though misguided men; we are bound to believe that their purposes are honest; their private and their public characters are ample vouchers for their sincerity. But *holy* zeal, when manifested in an *unholy* cause, is more pernicious than the most insidious, crafty, and destructive vice; as it enlists all the might and majesty of virtue beneath the lurid banner of sacrilege and crime. There are others, no doubt also honest, that are too wild and visionary for reasonable reliance. They start their game, and they hunt it to death like true sportsmen, reckless of the pangs they inflict; not for the value of the prey, but for the pleasures of the chase. There is no limit to their delusion, and when you speak to them of discretion, of moderation—they talk to you of Columbus,—of Saul of Tarsus,—of Moses and the pilgrim Israelites,—and recklessly rush forward in the wild determination of founding a republic, on the basis of a yawning and devouring sepulchre.

They say to us—you can never overcome slavery by the means you have adopted. Why, this is as good an argument in favour of slavery, as in behalf of the colonizationists, unless their superior merits be established. We may not, it is true, succeed against the joint efforts of the South and the colonizationists, but we can try—we may at least deserve success, though we cannot command it; and we shall at all events bear with us in defeat, should defeat ensue, the soothing consolation, that as



men we ventured to maintain the sacred rights of man—the rights for which our fathers bled; those rights which, however long and zealously disputed, must finally prevail:

“For freedom’s battle once begun,  
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,  
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

Still the question recurs, how is this great object to be accomplished?—That its accomplishment will be attended with difficulty is unquestionable. With the *consent* of the slaveholder it would prove comparatively easy. Enactments might be passed, similar in their character to those of the Spanish islands in the West Indies, providing that some part of the day, or some day in the week, should be appropriated to the slave, that he should be allowed payment for overwork, and that his earnings should be placed with some public depository until they should amount to sufficient to purchase his liberty. To aid in this, there might be a slave fund created by the nation and the respective States, to be annually appropriated to the same charitable purpose. This would be one measure, insufficient in itself, if you please, but strongly conducive, with others, to the completion of this magnanimous and immortal work.

Another plan would be, so as to meet all humours, and to co-operate with that referred to, to establish a *national* colony, having for its basis, not individual, but national security, and affording to the coloured colonists who shall voluntarily embrace the design, the enjoyment of the same natural and political rights, within their own realm, as we ourselves possess; and, in short, to adopt towards them principles similar to those by which our former relations with the mother country were regulated. This might lay the foundation for future commercial advantages to both; and, at all events, would hold out inducements which could not be despised, and in no possible result would be liable to be deplored.

Another auxiliary project would be, as preparatory or incidental to the success of the rest, that laws should be passed, providing for the *education* of the slaves, that thus they may, in time, become fit subjects for government, and not be cast loose upon society like so many wild beasts, to destroy themselves and others. Public schools should be established for their use, where they should, at least, be taught to read and to write, for it must be borne in mind that the chief argument now urged against them is that which is supposed to arise from total ignorance, and the consequent absence of those moral, intellectual, and religious restraints that they have never yet been taught to enjoy or to appreciate.

There is another measure that would be attended with a beneficial effect, and which is in entire consistency with individual rights, and that is, the abrogation of the various laws, in the different slave-holding States, prohibitory of manumission. It is well observed, that "the moral sense of the people, if left to itself, would soon cure the evil of slavery; but legislatures interfere and prevent it, under the pretext that the evil of manumission is greater than that of slavery. In this respect their conduct very much resembles that of a man who, having the small-pox virus in his system, takes medicines to prevent its eruptions upon his skin, and thereby drives it to his vitals. Thus the evil of slavery is increased by having its virus incorporated into the system, and driven to the vitals of the body politic, by preventing its eruptions in the form of manumitted slaves." Upon what principle, while these legislative bodies contend that the general government has no right to interfere with the privilege of property, so as to compel its relinquishment or surrender, they themselves can forbid the manumission of slaves, it is not easy to imagine. They will tell us, that it is upon the principle of security against the evil which will probably result from a restoration of slaves to freedom. Still, if slaves are to be considered as absolute property, why should they control

the disposition which masters may be inclined to make of them? If the national government cannot sway them for good purposes, why shall *they* sway them for pernicious purposes or from anticipations of possible evil? If the rights of the owner are paramount to all public considerations, those rights are just as much interfered with by unjust restraints, as they are by what is alleged to be an unconstitutional coercion. In truth, the laws of the slave States are calculated to perpetuate slavery—it is not the desire of the mass of the population, nor is it their interest, nor their policy, to promote manumission. It impoverishes the States in which it exists—it diminishes the increase of the whites—it augments that of the blacks; whereas by emancipation the increase of the black population would be lessened by one per cent per annum, and that of the whites would be enhanced nearly in the same proportion.

“By reference,” says a distinguished political philosopher, “to the censuses, it will be found that a slave population increases by procreation much faster than a free black population. By doing justice, therefore, to the slaves in manumitting them, their rapid increase will be greatly restrained. This presents an easy, natural, and just method by which the evil of an overwhelming coloured population may to a very great extent be prevented. This is a much more effectual method of lessening the comparative numbers of our black population than colonization or emigration. The diminution of the increase of blacks would be twenty-five thousand per annum, and the colonizationists, in fifteen years, have not succeeded in removing one tenth of that number.

“There is also this important difference between an emigration of twenty-five thousand a year, and a diminished increase of that number; in the former case the power of the fountain that sends forth these bitter waters, is not in the least degree abated, but would be rather invigorated by the exertions of nature to supply the *vacuum* occasioned by emigration. In



the latter case, the power of the fountain is weakened, its force is impaired, and in some measure paralyzed. As there is no *vacuum* made, there is no call of nature to supply it. The difference in the effect of these two causes would be surprising in the course of twenty years."

"But," say the Southern advocates, we quote the very language, "admitting slavery to be an evil, it is entailed upon us by no fault of ours; and must we shrink from the charge which devolves upon us, and throw the slaves in consequence into the hands of those who have no scruples of conscience; those who will not, perhaps, treat them so kindly?" No, this is not philosophy, this is not morality. We must recollect that the unprofitable man was thrown into utter darkness. To the slaveholder has truly been entrusted the *five talents*. Let him but recollect the exhortation of the Apostle: "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just, knowing that you also have a master in Heaven;" and in the final result he shall have nothing on this score with which his conscience need be smitten, and he may expect the welcome plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

Such is a brief summary of the argument upon the injustice and evil of slavery; and a more outrageous perversion of reason and religion, has, perhaps, rarely exposed itself to public reprobation and abhorrence. Let us briefly examine this monstrous doctrine. Slavery is entailed upon them, and shall they shrink from the charge? What! do they attempt rendering slavery a duty, while they admit it to be an evil,—a sympathetic, disinterested duty towards the unhappy victim himself? Acknowledging it to have been entailed upon them; can they not break the entailment, where they alone are interested? A depraved nature is entailed upon us all. Yet, who would undertake to justify robbery and bloodshed upon the mere ground

of his natural propensity to crime. There is but one thing more odious than the oppression of our fellow men, and that is the hypocritical attempt to excuse it, by the necessities of the oppressed. As to the inheritance of slavery, that argument shall grow stronger with every successive generation. Its origin may have been our *fathers'* fault, but its continuance is *ours*, and will, if we bequeath the curse to our issue, render us at once the descendants and the ancestors of guilt.

But if they should shrink from the charge, we are told the slaves will be thrown into less charitable hands. This is like the argument of the drunkard against abandoning his pernicious potations, namely, that drunkenness with him was hereditary; and that, by giving up his daily allowance, it would only serve to increase the stock for others, who were even more desperately devoted to the pleasure of the bowl than himself. This reeling course of reasoning, if it may be so called, could never have induced the adoption of the mischief; but is resorted to from necessity to justify its existence.

The least pardonable portion of these objectionable remarks is, that which would claim the divine sanction of religion in aid of this earthly abomination. "The unprofitable man was thrown into utter darkness—to slave-holders have been entrusted the five talents—having been faithful over a few, they shall be rulers over many things, and enter into the joy of their Lord." As I understand this version, the talents were so many slaves, and hence it may be supposed, that he who works them the hardest has, according to the notion of the advocate, the strongest claims upon Heaven. If this is to be the passport, the South are generally secure of salvation, and they need scarcely quarrel for its degrees. The only remaining part of the picture is that which relates to the scruples of conscience. This is too much!! the argument from interest, necessity and general expediency, may, perhaps, be tolerated; but I think this is the first objection founded in conscience against the abolition

of slavery; and, therefore, whatever may be its folly or its faults, it has the merit of novelty, at least.

The last measure I would advise, should be the passage of a law rendering all children, born after a given time, free upon their arrival at a certain age, with such stipulations as to the support of their parents, who themselves are free, or the contribution to the freedom of such as are slaves, as shall meet the approbation of legislative wisdom. Time and the occasion will not allow me to go into minute details for the purpose of exhibiting the advantages of the reform proposed, but they must be obvious to every thinking and practical mind. It is apparent, however, that in these recommendations we contemplate the concurrence of national and state efforts, as well as those of the mass of individuals. If that concurrence should be obtained, and if professions be true, who shall doubt it; although no *one* of these measures might be calculated to counteract the evil complained of, in their joint and concentrated influence, their success is inevitable, and in half a century from this period, the groans and clanking chains, and heavy curse of slavery shall be heard and seen and felt no more; the joy of our national anniversary shall be doubled, and we shall commemorate at the same time the achievement of liberty by ourselves, and the still more glorious extensions of it from ourselves to others.

To effectuate this, immediate means must be adopted. There must be no time-serving, no lukewarmness, no abandonment of principle. Let us knock constantly at the portals of liberty, night and day, until our admission is secured, and our prayers granted. For my single self, I would rather have it inscribed on my humble tomb, that I gave freedom to one man, than that I was the first discoverer and founder of the whole colony of Liberia; aye, or even of the continent of America itself, if it is to be devoted to slavery. Let us but once establish *a colony in the human heart*, dedicated and consecrated to philanthropy and justice, and its influence shall extend throughout the land, and its glorious rays,



like those of the sun, shall dispense peace and plenty, and warmth and vigour, and light and life, to this new world. Egyptian darkness shall flee before it, and Egyptian bondage, in the transport of regeneration, shall burst its galling fetters, and slavery shall be no more.

We cannot take leave of this subject without some remarks in relation to ourselves. That we have the right freely and fully to discuss the subject of slavery, unequivocally and broadly to condemn it, no man dare deny. That we have also the right to use every possible effort with the government, and with the free and slave States to abolish it, is equally beyond dispute; but, nevertheless, let us ever be discreet, for although prudence be said to be a coward virtue, in great political experiments she is sometimes worth all the rest. We yield to no man in the warmth of our devotion to this great cause; we can neither be seduced by favour, nor alarmed by threats, into an abandonment of our conscientious opinions,—but still we should not encroach, for the benefit of *one* class of men, upon the peace and tranquillity of *another*. The slaves themselves can, as matters now stand, do nothing towards their own emancipation. They may do much to prevent it; and we should therefore be careful to abstain from every measure that might be calculated to excite in them a hostile or rebellious spirit towards those to whom, as the laws now exist, they owe unqualified obedience. Let it be borne in mind that the slave is not alone to be commiserated—the master may also be an object of our compassion. That we have no privilege to express our abhorrence of slavery, to assail colonization as imparting no relief from its horrors, to adopt every honourable means, within our legitimate limits, to abolish both, is what never will and never can be reasonably contended. But to foment factions, to carry on an exterminating and implacable war against our Southern brethren, to invade their fire-sides and disturb their domestic security, is as remote from our duty as it is from our design or desire.

We have no sectional feelings nor personal jealousies; we have no malevolence towards any man; we have none of that hatred for our adversaries, that seems to be apprehended; nor can we look with any thing short of horror at the appalling spectres conjured up to our view of civil war, of bloodshed and desolation; yet all these "convenient scarecrows," with twenty times their stop, shall never deter us from a candid and dispassionate expression of our sentiments upon this momentous question. Our state would be worse than that of the slave whose condition we deplore, if we are to submit to the shackles of the mind, nor dare to express opinions so *near* the heart, upon a subject so *dear* to the nation. In boldly asserting the privilege of freemen, we fear we have never been fairly appreciated; certain it is, though perhaps unintentionally, we have been grossly misrepresented. We know this is a subject upon which the South is highly sensitive, and which requires great tenderness; but it also requires great firmness and decision. A too delicate and tremulous hand, even in the most painful operations, endangers the life of the patient, and is the height of cruelty, as it produces agony without any commensurate benefit.

That there may be individuals with us who carry their zeal to an improper extent, and are occasionally transported beyond the bounds of reason, it would be useless to deny. We lay claim to no infallibility. Fanatics are not confined to the profession of religion; they are to be found in all orders and degrees of men; but their enthusiasm, if not to be entirely justified, is certainly no legitimate subject of reproach upon the principles for which they intemperately contend, or upon the men by whom the same principles are more moderately and judiciously enforced. Collision, actual or imaginary, will ever be attended with excitement; but when the struggle between opposing parties is directed to the same great object, and the points in difference are rather in respect to men and measures, than in regard to principles and motives, we should at least be sparing of our censure,

if not lavish of our praise. Let us not, in self-exultation, impiously thank heaven that we are not as the Pharisees are, but with Christian charity and humility do good unto those who despitefully use us and persecute us, and thereby establish a *practical* superiority. The Colonization Society, right or wrong, is in difficulty, and requires assistance. You condemn the ill-fated scheme that led to these disastrous results; you will in no shape promote it; but still there are claims to your liberality, to your magnanimity, that cannot be resisted. The design, though ill-judged, may have been honest, and probably was so; do not let us, therefore, confound the unfortunate with the guilty; but let us rather lend an attentive ear to the story of their griefs, and relieve them if we can. Do not, at all events, permit those who have been deceived in their confidence in the colony, to pine away, and to starve in remediless want. Open your hands, and open your hearts to their necessities; and if they have erred, let them return and repent, and err no more.

It is but fair, having thus imperfectly submitted our views, to cast a hasty glance at some of those which are entertained by many of our respectable fellow-citizens. Let it not be supposed that we are enemies to colonization, rightly understood. We may be Christians, as well as our neighbours, without adopting all the ceremonies belonging to their creed. They may establish a thousand colonies, and people them all, provided the colonies are not converted into grave-yards, and the inhabitants into ghosts. They may extend the blessings of liberty as far as the sun shines, if they will only begin at home. They tell us Liberia is the Land of Promise. This is most true. But it is not the Land of *Performance*; and that, in short, is our very objection. "It keeps the word of promise to the ear, and breaks it to the hope." The mind of man is ever studious of change and pleased with novelty; if, therefore, Liberia presented any of those advantages which are professed, there would be abundant



testimonials in its favour—not from its agents, not from those who are pensioned out of it, not from those who have embarked their means in it, but never saw it—but from those for whom it was ostensibly designed, and who, so far from its commendation, seem to consider it at best but a poor exchange for the slavery from which they were relieved. It is said, however, that its want of success is imputable to the opposition of this society. That, indeed, is also partly true; but that opposition would not have prevailed, and might never have commenced, if it had not been for the remarkable vulnerability of its adversary, and the strong appeals of humanity in behalf of those whose credulity was abused, and whose rights were despised. Had it succeeded, its success could never have been a national blessing, but might have conduced to lull us into a fancied security, a fatal slumber, in the very arms of an earthquake, from which we only could have been aroused by the sound of the last trumpet.

They further say, that the South unites with them,—and it might seem so,—but, in truth, *they* rather unite with the *South*; and we defy any man carefully to examine their doctrines—their constitution—and the speeches of their respective supporters, without arriving at the conclusion, that they are entirely dependent, for their existence as a society, upon the South. “A breath unmakes them, as a breath has made.” Bound by this tenure, what free will or agency can they have—upon what security can they build their prospects of success?—upon empty and indefinite pledges—upon futile and illusory hopes—upon visionary gratuities and concessions, made to-day and forfeited to-morrow,—or if not actually forfeited, liable to such modifications and restraints as shall tend to relieve the slave-holder, without relieving the slave!

We have thus in rapid review shown you what is liberty and what is slavery;—how the former may be preserved, and the latter abolished. In conclusion, let me implore you to per-

severe in your enterprise, but with all becoming tenderness and sympathy: let not the indignation which you feel for the sufferings of your fellow men, betray you into intemperate measures, that shall rather increase than allay those sufferings. The object of your association is to restore the slaves to freedom, and, while thus improving their condition, to meliorate that of the country at large. The magnanimity of this object, no one can deny; but, nevertheless, much must depend upon the means adopted for its accomplishment. Do not, therefore, by a pertinacious and selfish adherence to any favourite plan, place in jeopardy that success to which all views, in order to be eligible, ought to be directed. Virtue, it is true, is always fearless, but always cautious. A headlong devotion to the purest and most heavenly pursuits not only involves the votary in danger, but often precedes assured disappointment and defeat. On the other hand, be not too tame neither: tameness and timidity are unworthy of this great cause, and often produce or promote the very danger which they apprehend. In fine, through evil and through good report, ever manifest yourselves to be the true soldiers of the blessed cross; the steady and devout followers of your heavenly Exemplar, "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."















